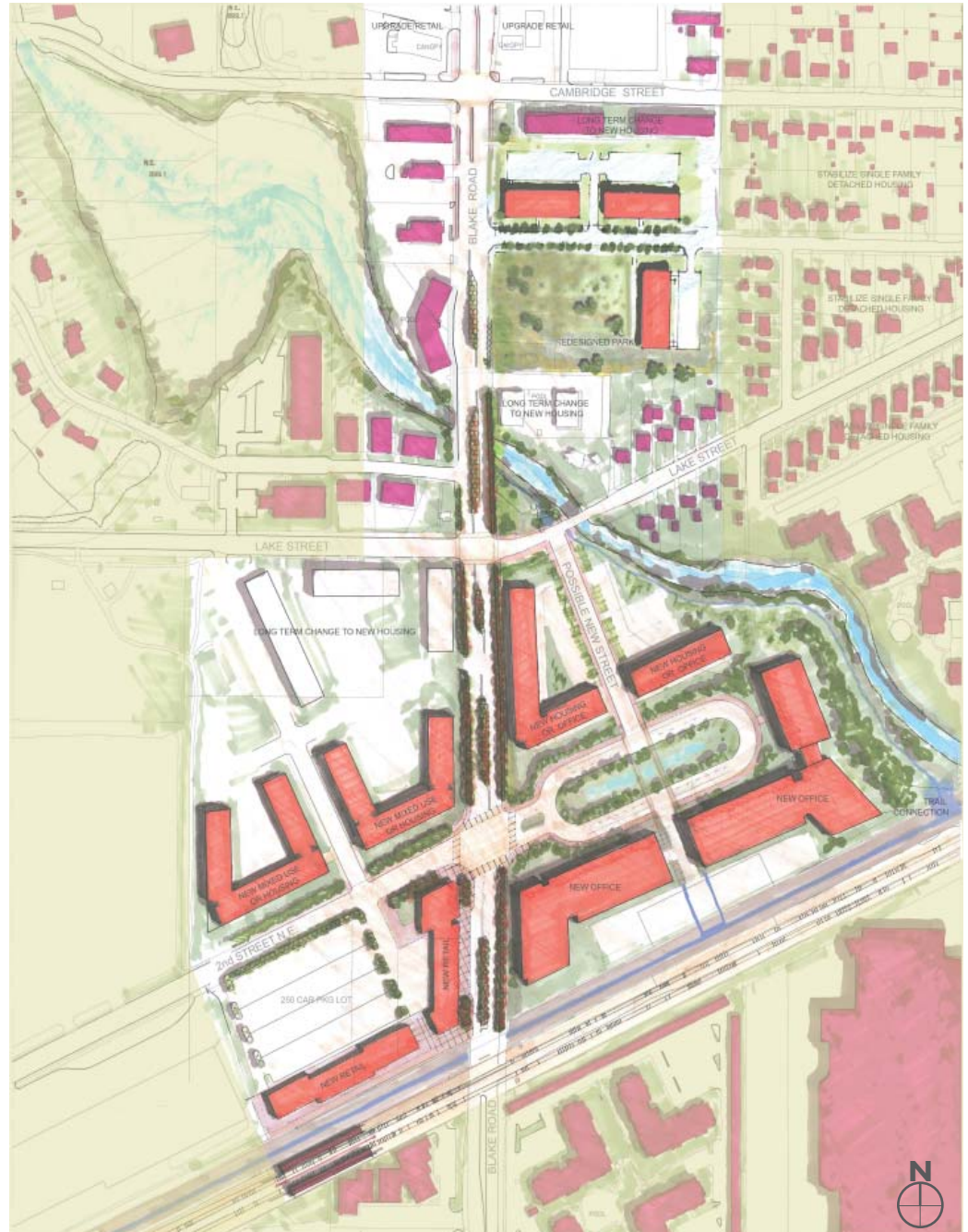


BLAKE ROAD CORRIDOR SMALL AREA PLAN

19 May 2009



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Acknowledgments to:

- Hennepin County
- City of Hopkins
- Blake Road Corridor Advisory Group
- Residents of Hopkins, Blake Road Corridor

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In May of 2008, Hennepin County, in conjunction with the City of Hopkins issued a request for proposals in order to develop the Blake Road Corridor Small Area Plan. In July of 2008, Hay Dobbs was retained as the professional consultant on the project. The intent of the plan is to serve as a policy and vision document for this portion of Hopkins. The plan seeks to weave current and future market forces together with the unique opportunities of the study area and its regional context. Recommendations within the plan will be taken up by the City for consideration and/or implementation.

The project process included collaborating and working with key stakeholders: the community, the city and the county. This was achieved by formal and informal discussion, dialog and input. Initial contact with the community was made informally at several locations on the 2008 National Night Out. Information was provided to interested parties and notification of upcoming Public Meetings was distributed. Four additional public meetings allowed for public input and participation throughout the entire project. The process was also informed by several documents the City of Hopkins had previously undertaken studies in which included: the City of Hopkins DRAFT Comprehensive Plan 2010 – 2030 (anticipated approval in late 2009) prepared by Hoisington Koegler Group Inc., the Blake Road Corridor Assessment prepared by Wilder Research, the East Hopkins Land Use and Market Study prepared by Hoisington Koegler Group Inc. and the Blake Road Streetscape Concept.

The public process provided key insight into the study area. Input on area strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and liabilities was addressed and incorporated into the final plan and recommendations. Additional analysis was undertaken by Hay Dobbs to better understand the physical, spatial, economic and demographic conditions within the area. Specific areas of analysis included: Major Regional Entertainment Centers; Retails Centers; Parks, Trails and Open Space; Permeable Surfaces; Urban Forest; Natural Areas; Employment per Acre; Vacant Land; Population Density; Commercial Price per Square Foot; Residential Price per Square Foot; Macroclimate; Microclimate; Views and Vistas; Pedestrian Movement Patterns; Figure-Ground; and the Street and Roadway Network.

The plan and recommendations were developed and refined over the planning time frame of approximately 8 months. The primary ideas behind the plan include focusing development near the future LRT station while creating an extension of the 2nd Street east of Blake Road that becomes the “front door” to future redevelopment of that site. Stronger east/west connections across Blake Road should be developed through new sidewalk, crosswalk and roadway connections across Blake Road.

Mixed Use development is proposed near the future LRT station. This area, west of Blake Road and south of 2nd Street should be 4-5 story mixed use development comprised of ground floor retail/service uses with residential and/or office uses above. A large park and ride facility should be planned for in the long term. This parking facility should be wrapped/screened with buildings. North of 2nd Street, higher density Residential development should occur. New public or private streets should be developed that better connect 2nd Street to Lake Street and Oaks Park.

The area east of Blake Road (the Hopkins Cold Storage Site) should be redeveloped to include office and residential uses. Office uses are envisioned on the southern portion of the site and residential or office uses on the northern portions of the site. The scale of this development is envisioned as 4 stories or more with the office uses potentially reaching 8 or more stories.

Redevelopment to the north of the study area is envisioned primarily near Cottageville Park. A redesigned park is seen as the focal point for this redevelopment. The park is envisioned to contain more passive uses such as picnic space, a community garden and gathering space. More active uses such as ball fields should be reserved for Oaks Park located slightly to the west of the study area.

Connections to Minnehaha Creek and more connected public open space are a key part of the plan. Efforts should be made to connect Cottageville Park to Minnehaha Creek along Blake Road. Better Creek access and visibility is also imagined. The associated streetscape plan is focused primarily on streetscape improvements to Blake Road. Priorities for the proposed streetscape include sidewalks, pedestrian scaled lighting, center medians and crosswalks along with additional amenities and street furnishings near 2nd Street and Blake Road. The most intense streetscape should occur in the southern portion of the study area and this should connect to future streetscape improvements south of the study area but north of Excelsior Boulevard.

The Blake Road Corridor Small Area Plan was presented to, and approved by, the Hopkins City Council on May 19, 2009.

Purpose



*Partial Aerial view of Hopkins.
The Blake Road Corridor Study Area is highlighted.*

Purpose

Hennepin County, in partnership with the City of Hopkins and community stakeholders, initiated a planning study in May 2008 to create a Small Area Plan for the segment of County Road 20 (Blake Road) extending from the Southwest Light Rail Transit Corridor to the Hopkins City Boundary just south of Highway 7. This study creates a vision for the future of the area and recommends land use, urban design characteristics, and streetscape improvements in support of this vision.



Aerial view of the Blake Road Corridor Study Area.

PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Urban Strategy and Recommendations



The "Main Street" concept oriented buildings along Blake Rd, the primary corridor.



The "Village" concept created a redeveloped village at the south end of the study area.

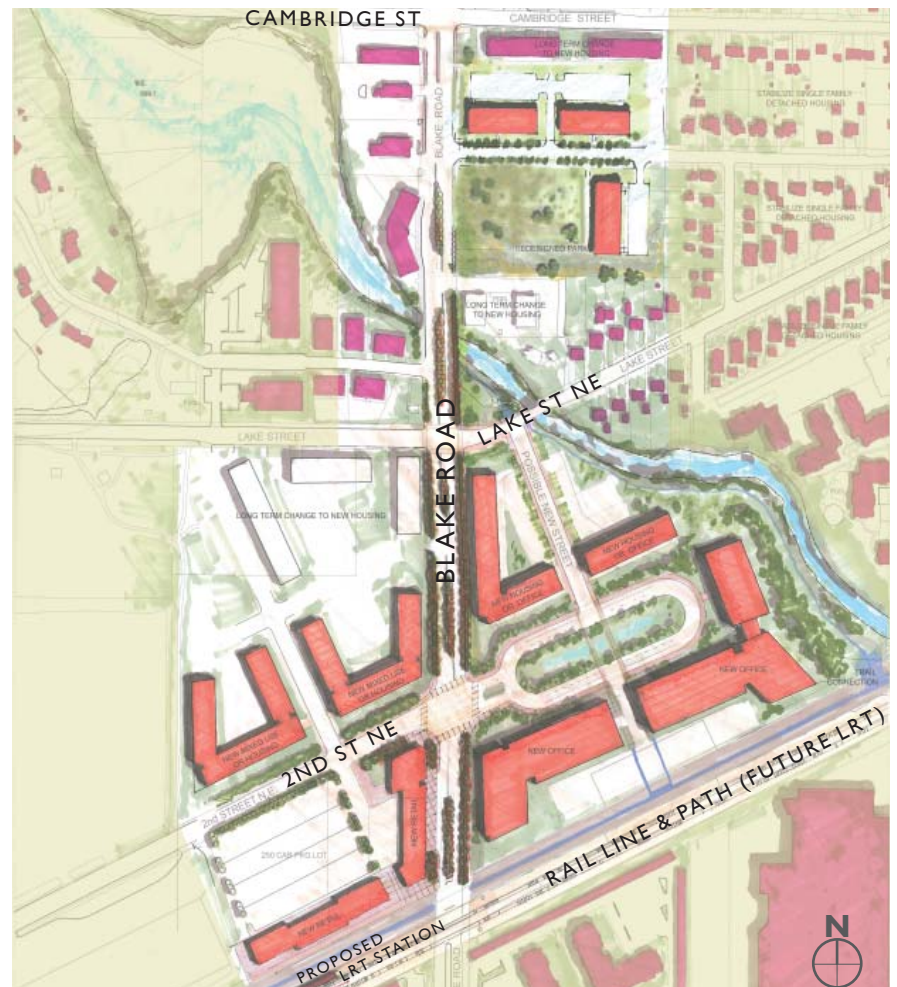


The "Greenway" concept focused development along a connective linear greenspace.

Blake Road Small Area Plan

During a series of three Public Workshops held from August to December 2008, guiding principles and visual preferences were identified and then integrated with additional analysis (see appendix) to generate three concept plans. The three concept plans (left column) that were presented during the process were reviewed, revised, and synthesized into the final Blake Road Small Area Plan (below). The final plan integrates several key ideas and commonalities that emerged during the workshops:

- Enhance and Connect Green and Open Spaces: Cottageville Park, Minnehaha Creek, and Strong Pedestrian/Bike Trails
- Redevelopment Opportunities at Hopkins Cold Storage Site, Cottageville Park and at the future LRT Station
- Blake Road Streetscape Improvements



The final Blake Road Small Area Plan integrates guiding principles and community goals throughout the study area.

Enhance and Connect Green and Open Spaces

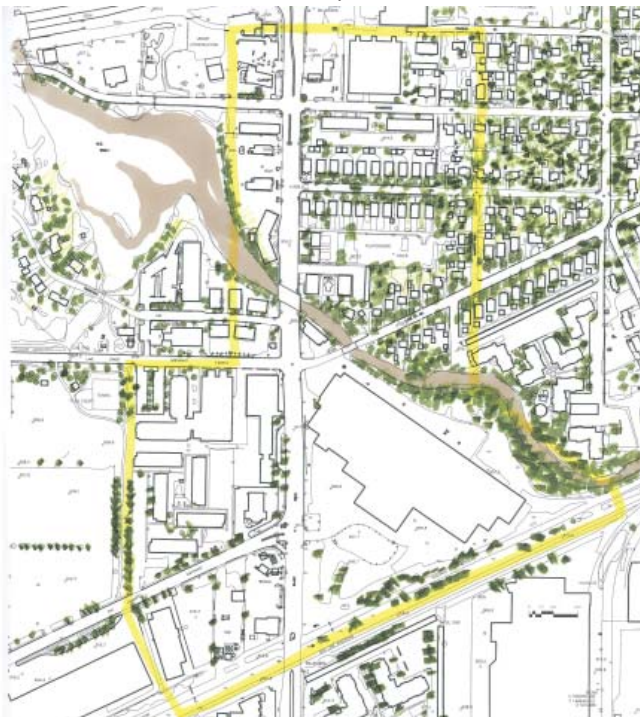
Within the study area, there are a few major Green/Open/ Natural amenities: Cottageville Park, Minnehaha Creek and the Bike Trail along the rail line. Oaks Park is also relevant as it is just outside the study area.

1. Cottageville Park is located at the North end of the study area on the East side of Blake Road. The park is seemingly hidden within a residential neighborhood and has suffered from its lack of visibility and access. Currently, the park is accessed from a dead-end alley off of Blake Road. There is little to no visibility of the Park from nearby streets, and many in the community are unaware of the park or have expressed a concern over using a park that is isolated, unwatched, and seemingly unsafe.

A critical element of this Small Area Plan will be to extend Cottageville Park out to Blake Road which will provide much needed visual access, create awareness of the public amenity, and allow residents and other visitors easy access. By opening up this park to the major roadway in the corridor and eventually connecting the green and open spaces within the study area, there will be improved passive surveillance and increased safety.



Parks and Open Space in Study Area



Existing Urban Forest and Natural Features



A - View of alley off of Blake Road that currently provides access to Cottageville Park. The alley is difficult to see from Blake Road and the park (in the background) is not visible from Blake Road or surrounding streets. Recommendations, as described later, include the acquisition and removal of two duplexes (partially shown above) in order to expand Cottageville Park out to Blake Road. Expansion of Cottageville park would improve access and safety and be a good site for a future Community Garden.

Enhance and Connect Green and Open Spaces



A public gathering space with a small stage or pavilion, similar to Downtown Park, would further serve to improve visibility, park use and safety in Cottageville Park.



Cottageville Park shall be more naturalized by planting rain gardens filled with native wildflowers and prairie grasses.



New playground equipment is a priority for Cottageville Park.

The location and amenities planned for Cottageville Park will result in an opportunity to use the park as a means to knit together the diverse surrounding community. Possible amenities include: improved playground equipment, a community garden, a small gathering space which could include a small stage and/or pavilion and the possibility of restroom facilities. Rainwater gardens will create a more naturalized experience for the park user, defining the character of Cottageville Park as unique from a more structured and athletic oriented Oaks Park.



A community garden can serve to knit together the diverse cultures in the surrounding community.

Enhance and Connect Green and Open Spaces



A - View of Minnehaha Creek from Lake Street Bridge in study area.

2. Minnehaha Creek is an incredible natural feature running through the study area. The creek runs under Blake Road and Lake Street, then follows the eastern border of what is currently the Hopkins Cold Storage site. The creek is largely hidden from view and easily goes unnoticed, especially by cars traveling on Blake Road. Currently, there are a handful of opportunities to get a glimpse of the creek, including a small bench and viewing area on the Bike Trail at the far eastern edge of the study area, and from the Lake Street bridge over the creek.

A major element in this Small Area Plan includes improving access to and preserving Minnehaha Creek. This study will identify several opportunities to introduce trails along the creek and to open up visual access to it as well. Along with any enhancements to or along the creek, preservation and restoration of this natural feature must be a priority. Development and redevelopment within the Study area have an immediate impact on the Creek as well as the entire Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, and special attention should be made to properly manage storm and surface water runoff.



Illustrative view looking north along Blake Road at the intersection of Lake Street showing a potential public green space, creek access, and new trail along Minnehaha Creek.

Enhance and Connect Green and Open Spaces



The bike and pedestrian path that runs parallel to the rail line at the southern edge of the study area is used year round. This plan suggests that new connections be made from this trail to other trails and green space throughout the study area.

3. Bike and pedestrian trails

run along the north side of the rail line. These are frequently used and were cited by area residents as one of the favorite amenities of the neighborhood. This plan recommends creating new north/south connections for bicyclists and pedestrians that will connect existing trails with new trails and enhanced green spaces along the corridor.

Proposed Green Connections include:

- A new trail along the south side of the creek that connects the existing bike and pedestrian trail up to Lake Street and Blake Road
- Expanding Cottageville Park out to Blake Road
- Potentially creating public open space and Creek Access on the East side of Blake Road
- Semi-Public Green Space at redevelopment site
- Addition of boulevards and sidewalk improvements along Blake Road

Enhance and Connect Green and Open Spaces

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Implementation Strategies for Cottageville Park

- Property acquisition east of Blake Road and west of the current park in order to raze the existing structures, and convert those parcels to park space;
- Redesign of the existing access road to create easier and better access to the park;
- Redesign of the park to create community garden space, picnic space and play areas;
- Potential acquisition of properties south of the existing park in order to connect more fully to Minnehaha Creek

Implementation Strategies for Minnehaha Creek

- Work with property owners adjacent the creek, particularly the Hopkins Cold Storage site, to create formal or voluntary easements along the creek in order to create trails, paths and/or access points to the creek;
- Property acquisition of the parcel northeast of the intersection of Blake Road and Lake Street in order to convert the parcel from its current use into a triangular park space;
- Design a park space that complements Cottageville Park, connects to trails and connects to Minnehaha Creek;

Implementation Strategies for Bike Trails:

Currently there is no trail system along Minnehaha Creek in the study area. Ideally, there should be a connection alongside the creek that extends from the bike trail on the south end of the study area, northwesterly along the creek connecting to Lake Street and on the Cottageville Park with the hope of a future triangular park in between. Hopkins Cold Storage site is the largest single parcel in the study area and has most creek shoreline. Efforts should be made to work with the property owner to create a voluntary easement alongside the creek that would allow for the construction of a trail. Specific funding, design, construction, maintenance and upkeep should be negotiated between the city, the property owner and the Minnehaha Watershed District.

Redevelopment Opportunities

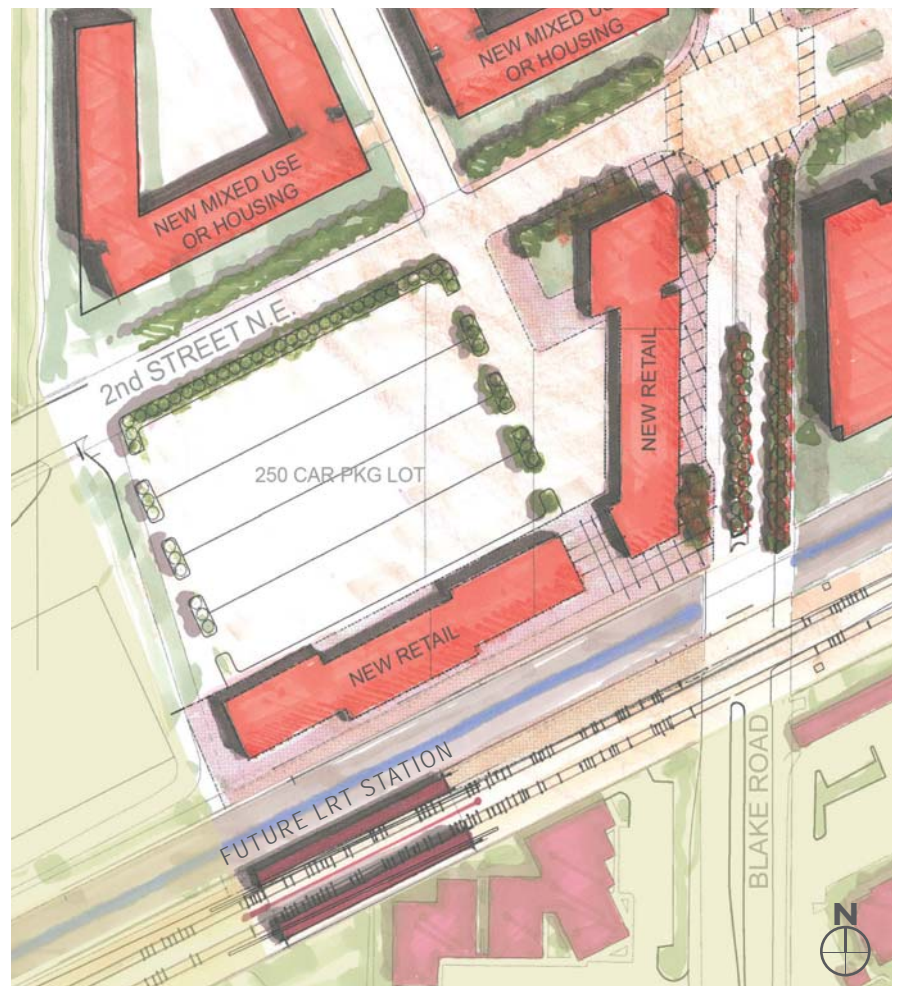
LRT STATION AREA



Key Plan



Sketch looking east at transit plaza



The future introduction of a Light Rail station to the study area will dramatically influence redevelopment patterns. The highest degree of influence will be within a quarter mile of the station itself. The Blake Road Corridor Plan assumes that the station will be sited west of Blake Road, north of the existing railroad tracks. This area must accommodate increased development density, a park and ride facility and an increase in vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The area is envisioned to have a large transit plaza north of the station with a significant mixed use development just to the north of the plaza. This development should include a large parking deck wrapped by residential development. It is recommended that the ground floor of this development introduce retail uses where appropriate – likely facing the transit plaza. A second development is envisioned parallel to Blake Road, north of the rail line. This development should provide for large sidewalk area to the east as well as a pull-off lane for “kiss and ride” activity (automobile drivers dropping off/picking up transit users). This easterly plaza should be connected physically to the transit plaza north of the station. Public streets and private internal drives should provide for access to the park and ride facility as well as for service vehicles. The scale of redevelopment in this area is anticipated to be 5-6 stories or more. Strong pedestrian connections should be created connecting to key areas outside of the study area as well as to connect key areas within the study area.

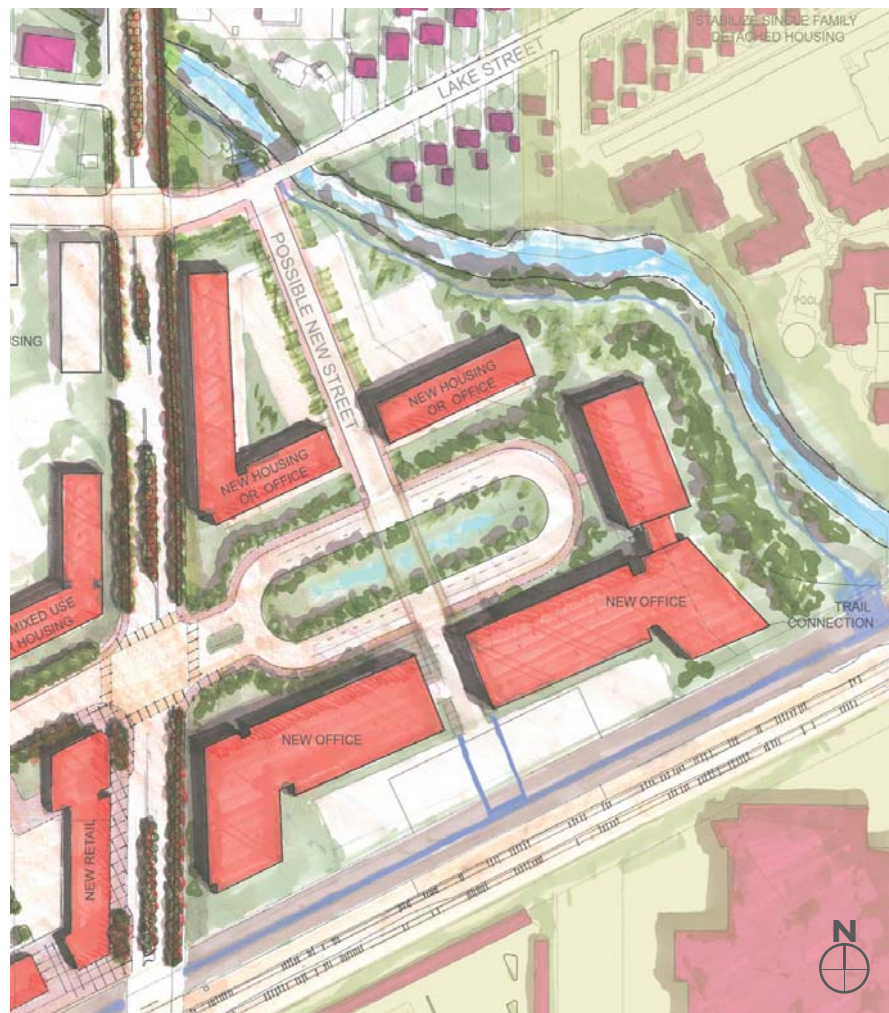
Redevelopment Opportunities

HOPKINS COLD STORAGE SITE

The Hopkins Cold Site presents the single greatest opportunity within the study area due to its large size and single owner. This area is envisioned as a major office development site developed as a “build to suit” corporate campus for a single entity or as several multi-tenant office buildings. The site is organized by the introduction of a new public or private street which will become the de facto extension of 2nd Street east of Blake Road. A large greenspace, that will become the focal point for the redevelopment, is envisioned surrounding or within the new street. North of the new street the area can be redeveloped as multi-family housing or additional office space, depending on market demand. This should create a large, internal, three-sided open space when fully developed. Views from the opposite sides of this space should face the trail to the south, and the creek to the east and north. The typical building height of this area is envisioned as 60’- 90’. Similar to the housing redevelopment north of the station area proper, the introduction of a new “north – south” street should be explored in order to provide stronger vehicular and pedestrian connections between Lake Street and the new development.



Key Plan



Redevelopment Opportunities

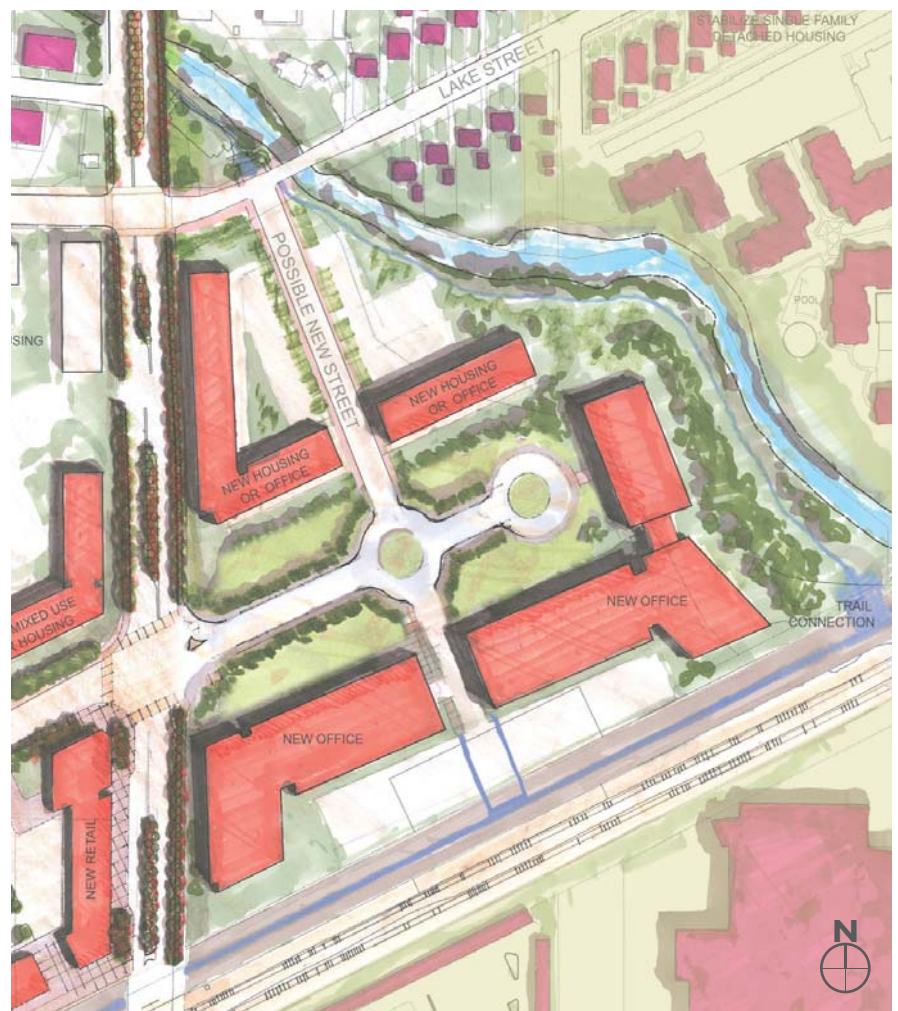
HOPKINS COLD STORAGE SITE OPTION 2

A second alternative for the Hopkins Cold Storage Site modifies the 2nd Street Extension by introducing a single roadway rather than an elliptical roadway. This allows for four smaller lawns in each quadrant rather than a single larger open space/rainwater garden in the center of the site.

An advantage to this Option is a reduction in the area of impervious surface thereby addressing stormwater management at each individual building which may prove useful if the development of the site occurred in phases. The surrounding uses and building types remain unchanged.



Key Plan



Redevelopment Opportunities

The extension of 2nd Street to the northeast across Blake Road is a key infrastructure change. This allows for public open space to connect across Blake Road to knit together these currently disparate parcels. Development of the appropriate scale will create this cohesive core to the overall study area.



Perspective view looking east down a new 2nd Street Extension with rendering of potential office and housing redevelopment at the Hopkins Cold Storage Site.



Illustrative bird's eye view of future Blake Road station area looking northeast. This rendering shows a potential second phase of development at the station with a multi-story mixed-use structure, including a structured parking deck for LRT Park & Ride. The former Hopkins Cold Storage is shown redeveloped with a mix of Office and Residential uses. An improved streetscape along Blake Road greatly improves pedestrian safety and access and promotes a walkable station and station area.

Redevelopment Opportunities

HOUSING REDEVELOPMENT ON COTTAGEVILLE PARK OPTION I



Key Plan

Redevelopment around Cottageville Park is intended to be a moderate scale of multifamily residential redevelopment. Development closer to Blake Road and farthest away from single family detached housing is envisioned to be 3-4 stories in height. This redevelopment should “step-down” in scale as it gets closer to existing single family detached housing stock. Development near this existing housing is intended to be 2 to 3 stories with a preference for lower scaled development. The massing of the development should also be broken up into smaller masses as it occurs closer to single family detached housing. In all cases redevelopment should respect the park by developing primary facades facing the park.



Redevelopment Opportunities

HOUSING REDEVELOPMENT ON COTTAGEVILLE PARK OPTION 2



Key Plan



Redevelopment Opportunities

HOUSING REDEVELOPMENT ON COTTAGEVILLE PARK OPTION 3



Key Plan



Redevelopment Opportunities

HOUSING REDEVELOPMENT NORTH OF LRT STATION



Key Plan

The area north of 2nd Street is currently moderate density residential development. It is anticipated that this existing development will endure for many years until such time that redevelopment economics make it feasible to redevelop the site(s). It is recommended that at that time a re-platting be examined in order to introduce a new “north-south” street that would create better connections between 2nd Street and Lake Street. Housing is still recommended in this area, but at a higher density due to the proximity to the LRT Station. Parking should be accommodated underneath each building as well on moderately size surface lots. Buildings should be sited close to the primary street R.O.W. with greenspace developed on the opposing side of the building. This redevelopment is anticipated to be 4-5 stories in height.









Redevelopment Opportunities

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

It is the expectation that significant redevelopment in the Corridor will happen due to favorable market conditions influenced by LRT and large redevelopments such as Excelsior Crossings. Some sites and improvements may not be supported solely by private investment due to the high costs of redevelopment or infrastructure improvements. Any form of public financing to support redevelopment in the Corridor will be considered on a case-by-case basis, but this plan acknowledges that any added value created by large-scale, market-driven redevelopment is best leveraged to create public infrastructure improvements and possible residential redevelopment opportunities along Oxford St.

Land Use Plan

LEGEND

-  Mixed Use
-  High Density Residential
-  Low Density Residential
-  Park
-  Medium Density Residential
-  Commercial

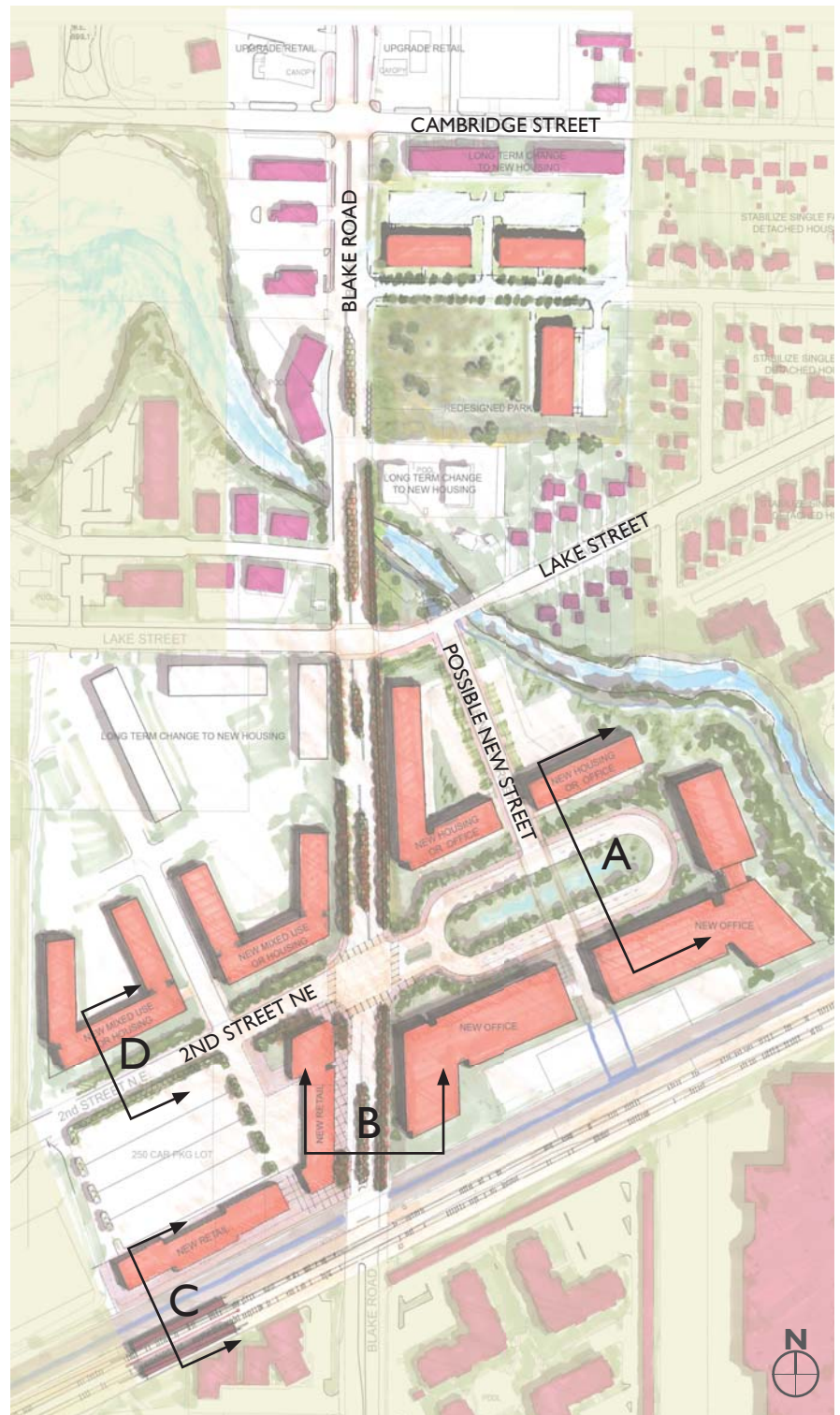
The proposed Land Use seeks to concentrate Mixed Use development along Blake Road near the future LRT Station while supporting various densities of residential development with the study area. Commercial uses are provided for in portions of the northern study area. Specific Land Uses and parcel designation will be finalized and adopted by the City of Hopkins. These land uses will be informed by both this study and the updated City of Hopkins Comprehensive Plan. As Cottageville Park and other Public Open Spaces are redesigned, Land Uses around those respective perimeters may be modified as required to realize the intent of this study. Zoning change and definition are expected to be completed in 2010.



Design Guidelines

Street Sections

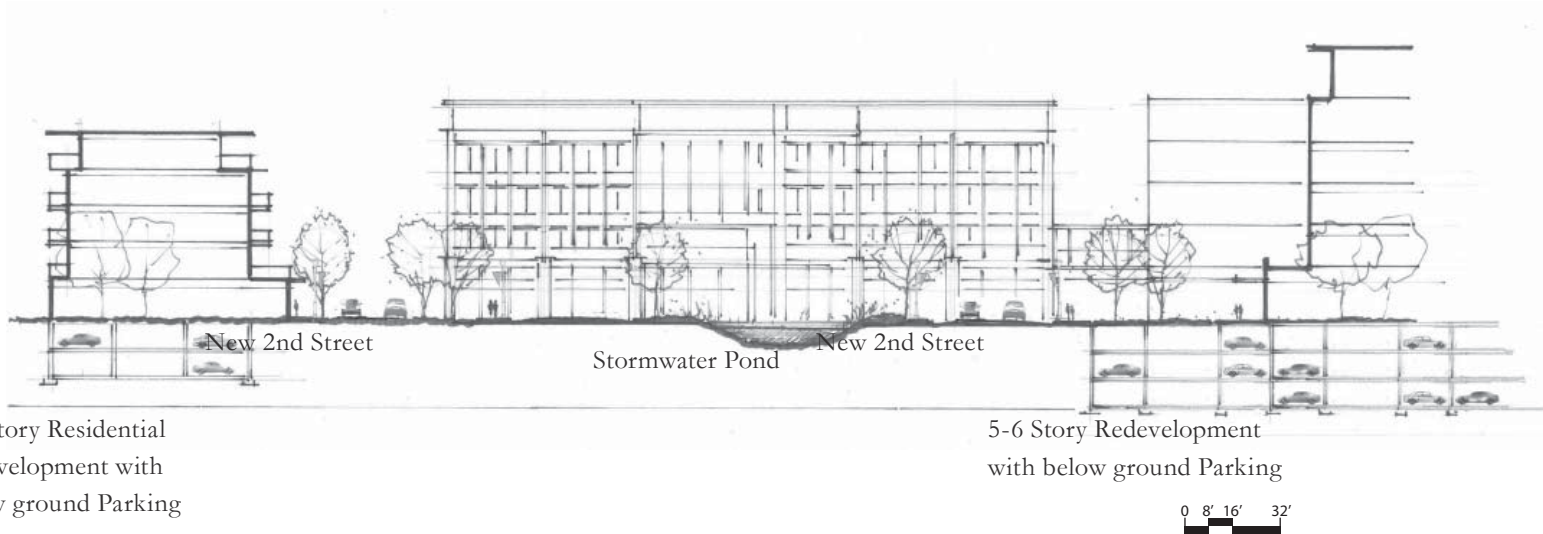
- A) Through Redevelopment Site (Former Hopkins Cold Storage)
- B) Through Blake Road north of the Rail Line
- C) Through the Blake Road LRT Station
- D) Through 2nd Street at LRT Station



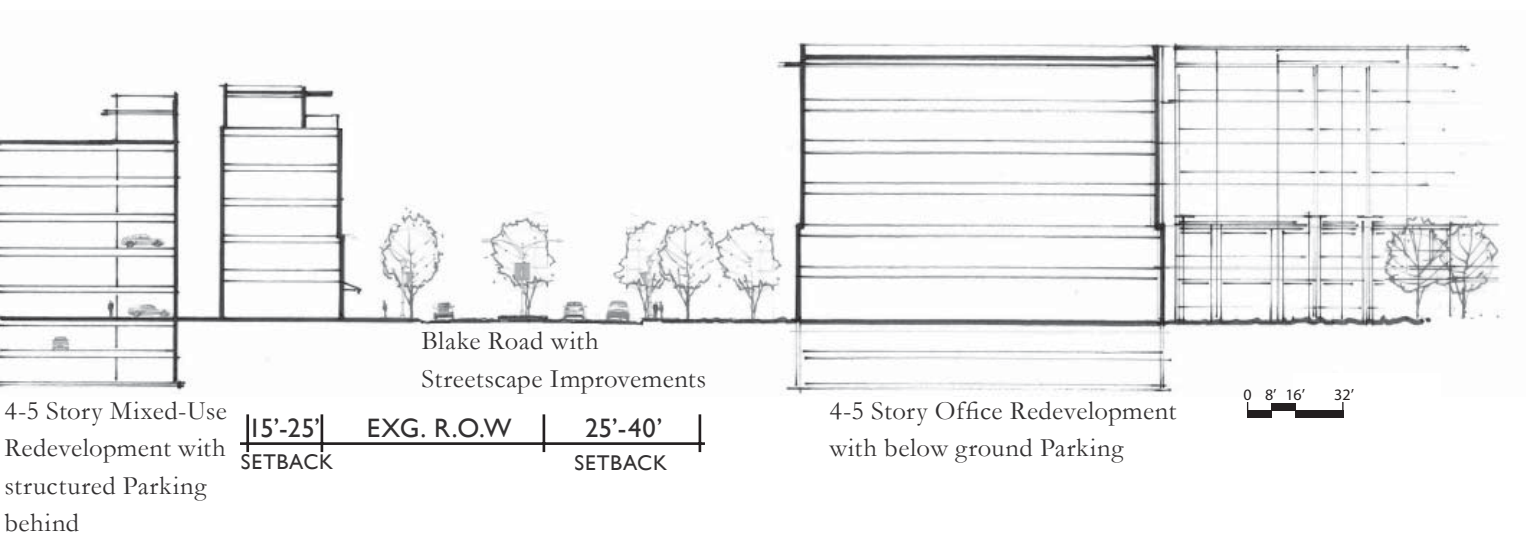
Illustrative Site Plan showing section locations

Design Guidelines

SECTION A

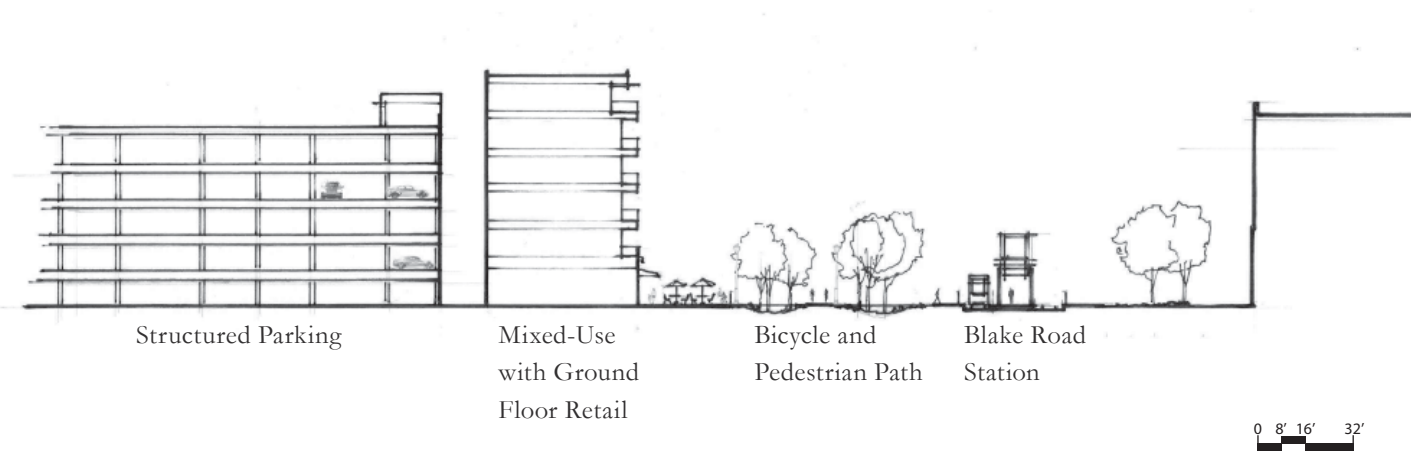


SECTION B

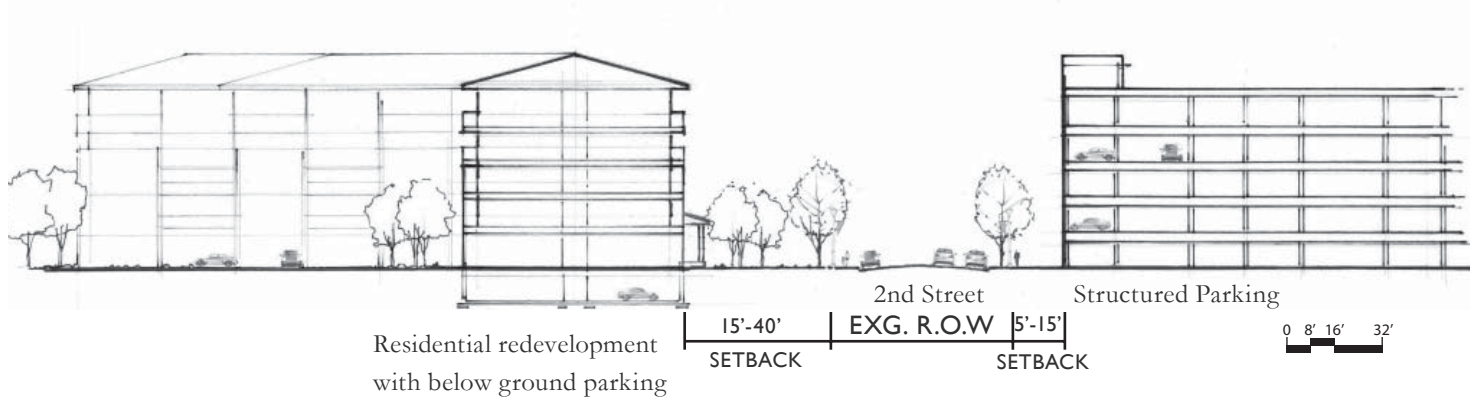


Design Guidelines

SECTION C



SECTION D



Recommended Building Heights and Estimated Housing Unit Counts

Additionally, to aid in understanding the intent of these recommendations, anticipated units counts of new housing is indicated. An estimated number of housing units based on the adjacent sketch was calculated using an average of 1100sf per unit which is the approximate size of a 2 bedroom unit. The total estimated unit count per the attached guidelines shows a range of 608-816 units for the entire study area.



Streetscape Improvements

Blake Road is the primary north-south route within the study area. Blake Road connects Excelsior Boulevard with Highway 7 and is heavily used by area residents, visitors, workers and commuters. Currently there is no continuous sidewalk along Blake Road. Dirt paths are worn in the grass adjacent to the curbs where pedestrians have made their way along the side of the road where no sidewalks exist. Additionally, there are no pedestrian amenities whatsoever such as benches, bike racks, trash receptacles, pedestrian oriented street lighting or bus shelters, nor are there many street trees.

The goal of the streetscape plan is to provide for a phased, achievable streetscape that can be implemented over time as resources allow. The intensity of the streetscape is intended to be varied from minimal sidewalks on the north end of the study area to a robust streetscape near the future LRT station at the south end of the study area.

The first phase of the work should include a continuous 6 foot sidewalk along both sides of the street with pedestrian lighting installed or with stubbed-in wiring for future pedestrian lighting installation.

Crosswalks should be installed at key intersections, especially on the south end of the study area near 2nd Avenue.

A center lane boulevard should be installed in the middle of the roadway where possible while still accommodating left turn lanes and cross traffic. Additionally, the Blake Road drive lanes should be re-stripped in order to create bike lanes alongside the current drive lanes.

Streetscape Improvements



Photo of existing conditions along Blake Road. Currently there are stretches of Blake Road that have no sidewalks.



Rendering of the new 6 foot wide sidewalk to be constructed along Blake Road. Final design and construction of a sidewalk has been funded and is scheduled for Spring/Summer 2009. The City of Hopkins will continue working to enhance and improve the streetscape along Blake Road as funding is available in order to reach the long-term vision of an enhanced streetscape.

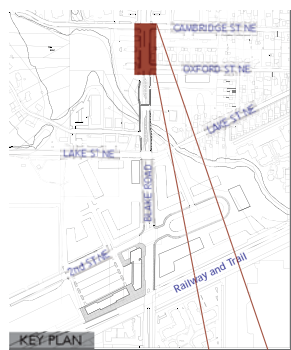


Rendering of fully-executed streetscape improvements along Blake Road. The future vision for the Blake Road streetscape includes the addition of North & Southbound Bike lanes, crosswalks and safe havens, tree-lined boulevards and medians, ornamental lighting, benches, trash receptacles, and benches.



Image of recently enhanced streetscape along Excelsior Boulevard just west of Blake Road.

Streetscape Improvements



ORNAMENTAL LIGHTING

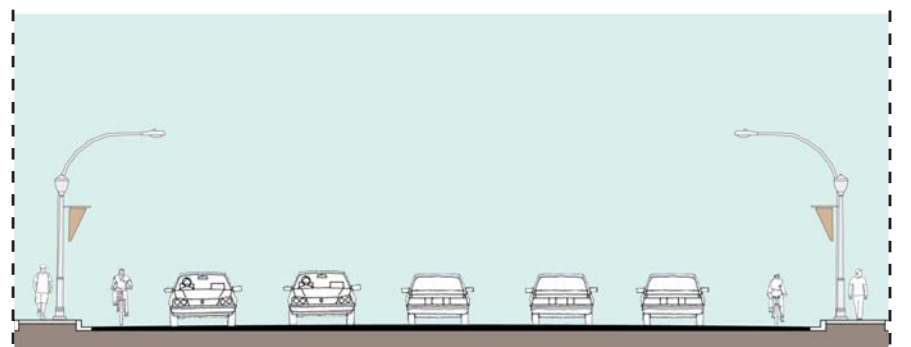
STREETSCAPE FEATURES

MAINTAIN MINIMUM 6 FOOT WIDE SIDEWALK WITH A 2 FOOT BY 2 FOOT SCORING PATTERN.

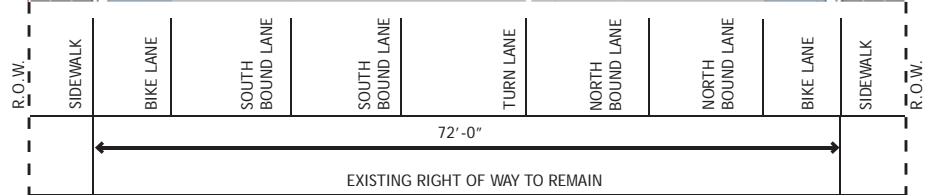
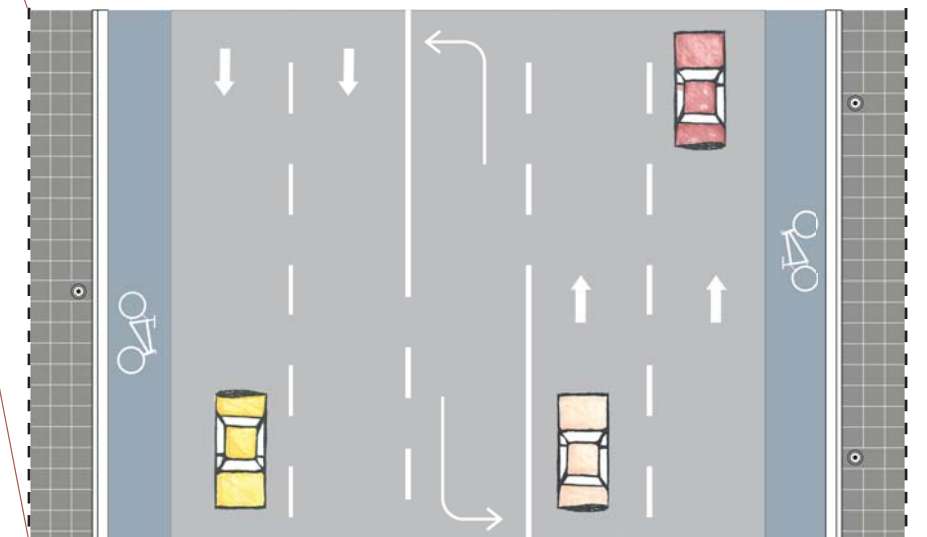
EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY TO REMAIN.

EXISTING LANE WIDTHS REDUCED TO ACCOMMODATE NEW NORTH AND SOUTHBOUND BIKE LANES.

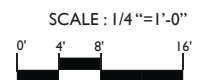
ADD ORNAMENTAL PEDESTRIAN LIGHTING ALONG BOULEVARDS IN ADDITION TO EXISTING OVERHEAD STREET LIGHTING.



SECTION



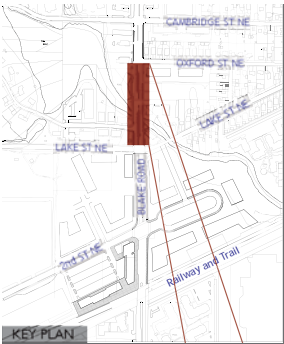
PLAN



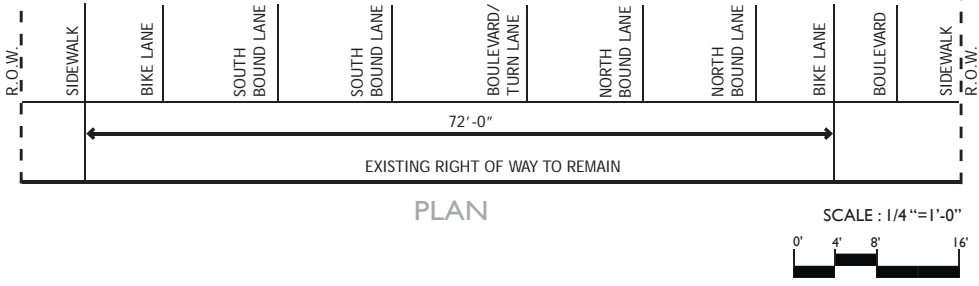
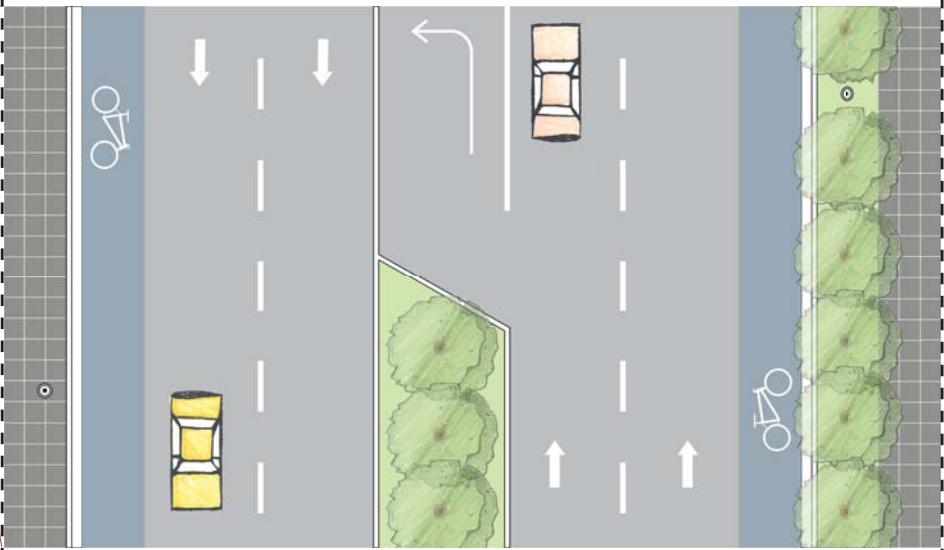
SCALE : 1/4" = 1'-0"

STREETSCAPE I (LOWEST INTENSITY)

Streetscape Improvements



SECTION



STREETSCAPE FEATURES

MAINTAIN MINIMUM 6 FOOT WIDE SIDEWALK WITH A 2 FOOT BY 2 FOOT SCORING PATTERN.

EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY TO REMAIN.

EXISTING LANE WIDTHS REDUCED TO ACCOMMODATE NEW NORTH AND SOUTHBOUND BIKE LANES.

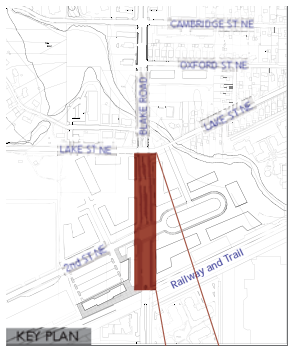
CENTER MEDIAN/BOULEVARD WITH TREES ADDED IN EXISTING TURN LANE AT SELECT LOCATIONS ALONG BLAKE ROAD.

PEDESTRIAN SAFE HAVENS ADDED TO THE CENTER MEDIAN/BOULEVARD.

ADD ORNAMENTAL PEDESTRIAN LIGHTING ALONG BOULEVARDS IN ADDITION TO EXISTING OVERHEAD STREET LIGHTING.

STREETSCAPE II (MEDIUM INTENSITY)

Streetscape Improvements



ORNAMENTAL LIGHTING



BENCHES



TRASH RECEPTACLES

STREETSCAPE FEATURES

MAINTAIN MINIMUM 6 FOOT WIDE SIDEWALK WITH A 2 FOOT BY 2 FOOT SCORING PATTERN AND COLORED STRIPING.

EXISTING LANE WIDTHS REDUCED TO ACCOMMODATE NEW NORTH AND SOUTHBOUND BIKE LANES.

CENTER MEDIAN/BOULEVARD WITH TREES ADDED IN EXISTING TURN LANE AT SELECT LOCATIONS ALONG BLAKE ROAD.

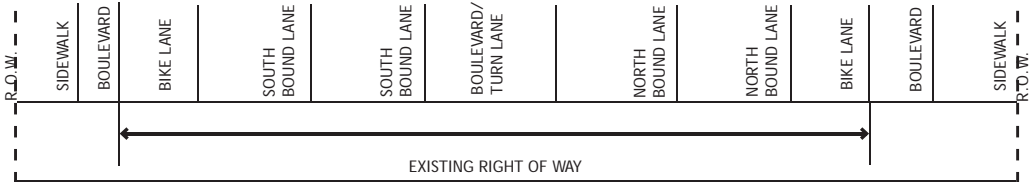
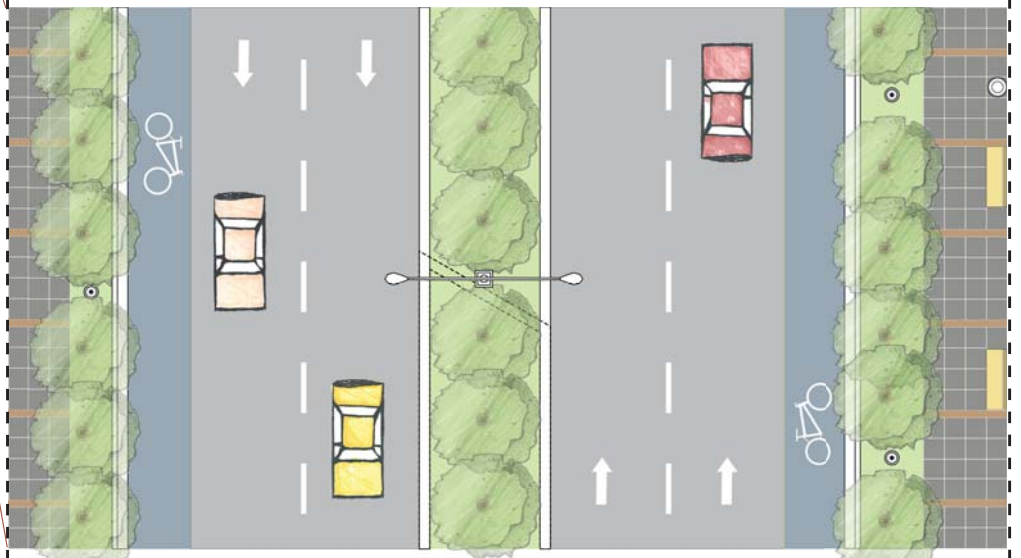
PEDESTRIAN SAFE HAVENS ADDED TO THE CENTER MEDIAN/BOULEVARD.

ADD ORNAMENTAL PEDESTRIAN LIGHTING ALONG BOULEVARDS IN ADDITION TO EXISTING OVERHEAD STREET LIGHTING.

ADD SITE FURNITURE INCLUDING BENCHES, TRASH RECEPTACLES, AND BIKE RACKS.



SECTION



PLAN

SCALE : 1/4"=1'-0"

STREETSCAPE III (HIGHEST INTENSITY)

Streetscape Improvements

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The streetscape improvements proposed herein are intended to be done in phased stages as funding is available. These stages should be coordinated by the City of Hopkins to ensure that subsequent phases are not precluded by current activity nor that they become redundant with prior phases.

An overall vision for the streetscape within the study area has been articulated in this study. However, site investigation, site surveys, geotechnical work, design, engineering and inter-governmental coordination are still required. It is anticipated that these efforts will be completed in the design phases of the project.

Current funding for a portion of the project has been secured through a Hennepin County TOD grant. It is anticipated that this money will be used for design and construction (Summer 2009) of a portion of the proposed sidewalks and potentially to provide conduit and stub-ins for future pedestrian scaled lighting. The specific proposed sidewalk width is currently shown as a minimum of 6'-0" wide. This should be coordinated with existing curbs, right-of-ways, boulevards, City of Hopkins Standards, and future streetscape work.

The City intends to apply in 2009 for additional funding through the Hennepin County TOD Grant program as well seeking other sources of funding. The next phases of the work should seek to include pedestrian scaled lighting along Blake Road as well as Roadway Center Medians and Restriping to include Bike Lanes on Blake Road.

Subsequent phases of work should be coordinated with improvements required for the future LRT Station as well as with future development. This work should include: Crosswalks, Street Furnishings, Street Trees and additional decorative treatments.

Public Participation

MEETING SCHEDULE

August 25, 2008

Blake Road Public Meeting #1, Principles and Initiatives Workshop

September 10, 2008

Blake Road Corridor Concept Plans Workshop

October 6, 2008

Blake Road Corridor Concept Plan Alternatives Review

October 22, 2008

Blake Road Public Meeting #2

October 30, 2008

Blake Road Visioning Session #1 (Southwest Transitway)

December 3, 2008

Blake Road Public Meeting #3

January 20, 2009

Blake Road Public Meeting #4, Final Concept Public Open House

MEETING SUMMARIES

The first of four formal public meetings was held August 25th, 2008. The general agenda included an Orientation, Principles and Initiatives Presentation/Workshop and Small Group Break-out Session, Wrap up and a “Homework” assignment. Specific areas covered included the: Project Schedule, Project Assumptions, Anticipated Project Outcomes, Role of Community Involvement and Interface with the Southwest Transitway Station Area Planning (happening concurrently). The workshop, through a “dot exercise”, gave participants the opportunity to indicate where they live and/or work; to note areas within the study area that are positive and valuable; and to note areas that they perceive as negative or a bad influence. The workshop then gathered neighborhood feedback on their visual preferences in the following four areas: Streetscape, Housing Types, Types of Retail/Mixed Use Development; and Parkways/Trails/Promenades. Images were rated as to their desirability on a scale of 1 to 5. An interactive presentation was then given with the intent of establishing overall guiding principles for the study area. Additional comments and feedback was solicited with comment cards.

Public Participation

MEETING SUMMARIES CONTINUED

The second of four public meetings was held October 22nd. The work to date and project process as reviewed. The findings/results of the first public workshop were presented. These included: The compilation of the “dot exercise” noting the aggregation of positive and negative aspects of the study area; Preferred visual character of Streetscape, Housing Types, Types of Retail/Mixed Use Development; and Parkways/Trails/Promenades; and a set of Guiding Principles for the study area. Positive attributes of the study area included Minnehaha Creek, area trails, selected businesses. Other less tangible positives included: good access, good neighbors, small town feel, close to work and the future LRT line. Negative attributes identified several businesses; the lack of continuous sidewalks; crime/drugs; traffic; and unsafe street crossings. Certain activities that happen in and around Cottageville Park were also identified as a negative as well as trash and litter, loitering, anti-social behavior and poor quality multi-family housing. Market, demographic, physical and traffic analysis of the study area and the region was presented to convey a common baseline of understanding. Three diagrammatic concept plans for the study area were presented by Hay Dobbs. These concepts were labeled “Greenway”, “Village” and “Mainstreet”. Each concept presented a unique future direction for public open space, circulation and buildings. The ideas behind each option were presented along with the respective merits and shortcomings of each scheme. Participants then engaged in a “mash-up” exercise where preferred ideas from the plans were cut and pasted together into a composite plan. This composite plan was supplemented by the use of “visual game cards” that gave participants the ability to indicate preferred buildings types and scale as well as desired public amenities. Each table of participants then presented their composite plans and explained their rationale for its content.

The third of four public meetings was held December 03, 2008. The work to date and project process was reviewed. The findings/results of the second public workshop were presented. Commonalities of the composite plans were then presented. These included: Desire for Connected Public Greenspace / Open Space; Acquisition and Removal of two Duplexes on Blake Road; Extension of Cottageville Park out to Blake Road; Streetscape - Functional, Moderately Decorative, Pedestrian-oriented Lighting; Concentrate Amenities where appropriate (especially near future LRT station); Add center medians where possible; Residential Redevelopment (Multifamily) at the north end of study area around Cottageville Park; Focus redevelopment near future LRT Station/Lake Street Area; Create a place through a mix of uses; Add density near future LRT Station; Keep existing retail at North end of Blake Road; Create stronger pedestrian/bike connections throughout study area. Prior to the presentation and based on this input, Hay Dobbs developed a final concept plan. This final concept plan was presented in order to get feedback from the meeting participants. Plans and illustrative drawings were presented in order to describe the components of the plan. The primary ideas behind the plan include focusing development near the future LRT station while creating an extension of the 2nd Street east of Blake Road that becomes the “front door” to future redevelopment of that site. Connections to Minnehaha Creek and more connected public open space are also included in the plan. A streetscape plan was also presented that focused primarily on streetscape improvements to Blake Road. Priorities for the proposed streetscape include sidewalks, pedestrian scaled lighting, center medians, crosswalks along with additional amenities and street furnishings near 2nd Street and Blake Road. The most intense streetscape should occur in the southern portion of the study area and this should connect to future streetscape improvements south of the study area but north of Excelsior Boulevard. Details of the plan can be found within the overall report.

A final public open house was held January 20th, 2009. Comments and input from the third public meeting were incorporated into the final concept plan and streetscape. Presentation boards of the entire project were displayed and a Powerpoint presentation was given by Hay Dobbs. A brief question and answer period followed the presentation.

Final city staff, county and public input was incorporated into the final plan and plan document. The plan was presented to the Hopkins City Council for approval on May 19th, 2009.

Public Participation

OUTREACH EFFORTS

To notify the public of public meetings being held for the Blake Road Corridor Small Area Plan, the following public outreach efforts were made by the city of Hopkins:

1. A newsletter was mailed to every property owner in the study area with background information and other city initiatives in the corridor in addition to the date, time and location of the August 25th kick-off meeting.
2. Flyers for each meeting were posted in the area, including at local businesses, bus stops, and multi-family housing lobbies.
3. Somali and Spanish translation materials were offered at meetings and in the newsletter.
4. Staff attended a local Somali leaders meeting to garner input as Somali attendance at plan meetings was lacking and Somalis and other East African immigrants comprise a significant portion of the study area's population.
5. Press releases were submitted to local newspapers for every public meeting.

Urban Analysis

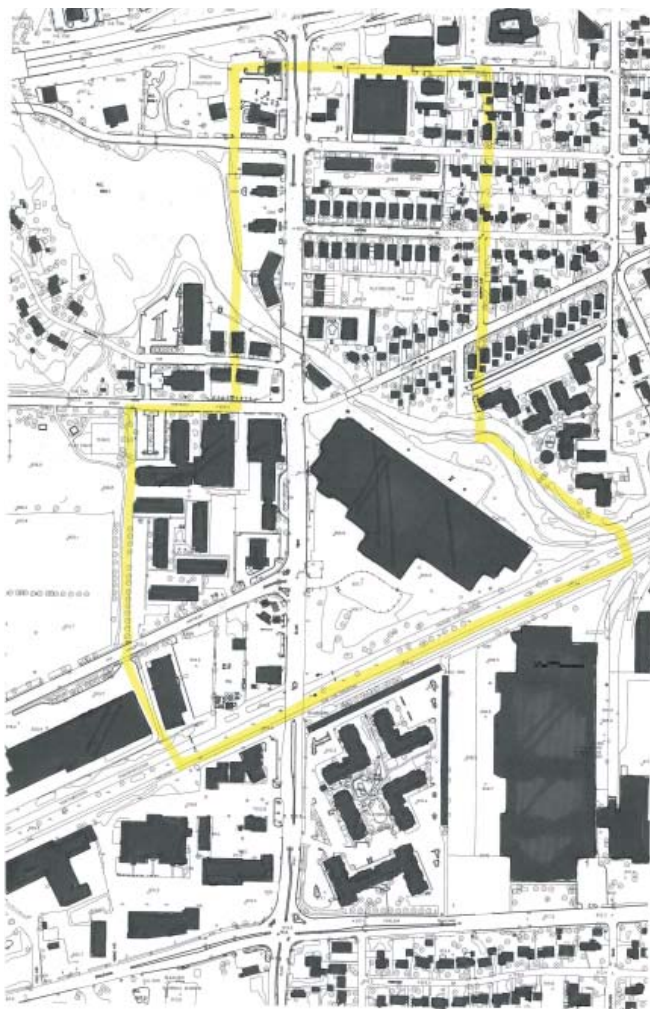


Figure Ground Diagram of Study Area



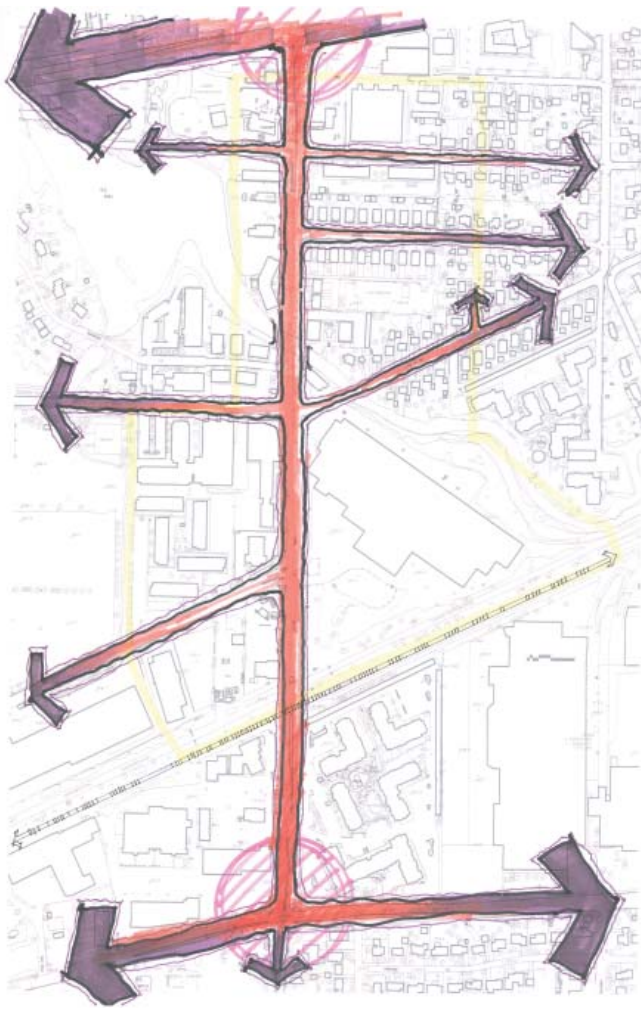
Permeable Surfaces in Study Area

Urban Analysis



Urban Forest and Natural Features

Urban Analysis



Street Network of Study Area



Trails and Sidewalks in Study Area

Dot Exercise and Results

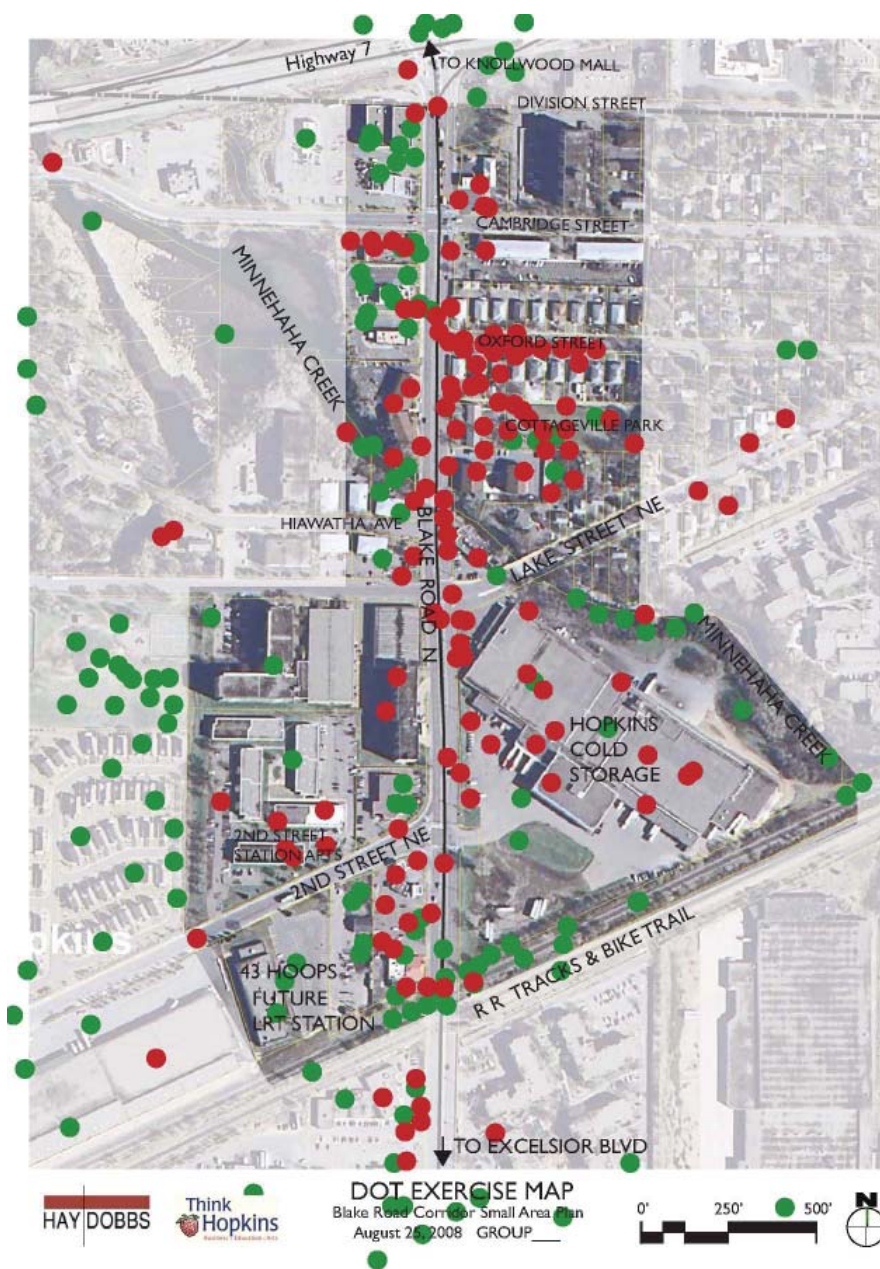
DESCRIPTION

- **Green Dots** mark strengths, assets, positive qualities of the neighborhood
- **Red Dots** mark weaknesses, liabilities, negative qualities of the neighborhood

The Dot Exercise used a combination of mapping and written comments from meeting participants in order to collect data about the perceived positive and negative qualities of the study area.

Each participant was given a comment form, five (5) green dots, and five (5) red dots. Then they were asked to write down a description of five of the assets or positive features of the study area and then place their green dots on the map to correlate to those locations. For example, many meeting participants wrote on their comment forms that Minnehaha Creek was a great resource to the neighborhood and then they put one of their green dots over the creek on the map.

Similarly, participants repeated this process for the negative aspect or liabilities of the neighborhood. Participants wrote down a description of five negative qualities of the study area and then placed their red dots on the map to correlate to those locations. For example, many people felt that the duplexes around Cottageville Park were a liability to the neighborhood, so they wrote this on the comment form and then placed a red dot over the park on the map.



The composite map above shows all of the positive qualities (green dots) and negative qualities (red dots) from all of the participants. All of the written comments were tallied and organized to generate a list of most frequently mentioned positive/negative qualities. The results of this exercise are listed on the next two pages.

Dot Exercise and Results

RESULTS: ASSETS AND POSITIVE QUALITIES



The second most commonly identified assets were the Creek, Natural Areas, and the Biking & Walking Trails

- Lack of Access and Safety was a common concern



A majority of the green dots were placed on specific retail and businesses

Other assets or positive qualities were:

- New Developments / Opportunities for Redevelopment
- Access to Excelsior Blvd., Hopkins Main St., and Minneapolis
- Good Neighbors
- Small Town Feel
- Close to Work
- Future LRT Site

Dot Exercise and Results

RESULTS: LIABILITIES AND NEGATIVE QUALITIES



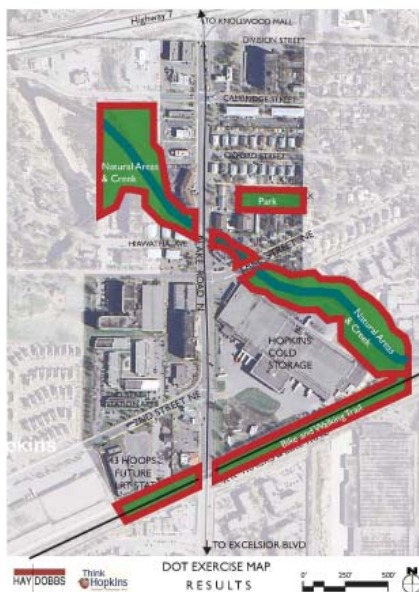
A majority of the red dots were placed on specific retail and businesses.



Commonly identified liabilities or negative qualities were: No Sidewalk, Unsafe crossings for pedestrian and bicyclists, Crime & Drugs, Traffic



A significant number of participants identified Cottageville Park Residences (Duplexes) as a liability to the neighborhood



Lack of access to greenspace, parks, and Minnehaba Creek was frequently listed as a negative quality

Other liabilities or negative qualities were:

- Trash and Litter
- Anti-social Behavior, Noise Complaints
- Loitering in the streets, Stopped Cars
- Poor Quality Multi-family Housing

Visual Preference Survey

STREETSCAPE – HIGH SCORES

The visual preference survey used a series of precedent images to gather subjective information about the preferred aesthetics, scale, density, and feel of four types of categories: Streetscapes; Housing Types; Retail & Mixed-Use; and Nature, Parks & Trails.

Meeting participants were shown a series of precedent images from each category and then asked to give a score from 1 to 5 for each image based on their preference for them. The scores for each image from every participant were tallied and averaged. The resulting high and low scoring images are shown on the following pages for each category.



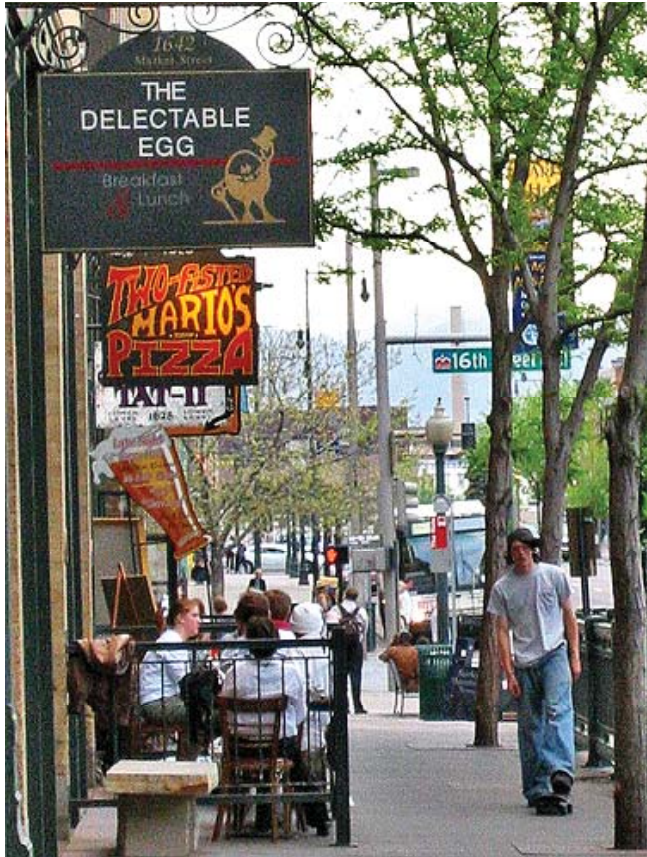
Score 4 / 5



Score 4.26 / 5

Visual Preference Survey

STREETSCAPE – LOW SCORES



Score 2.77 / 5



Score 2 / 5

Visual Preference Survey

HOUSING TYPES – HIGH SCORES



Score 3.54 / 5



Score 3.26 / 5

Visual Preference Survey

HOUSING TYPES – LOW SCORES



Score 2.26 / 5



Score 2 / 5

Visual Preference Survey

RETAIL & MIXED USE – HIGH & LOW SCORES



Score 3.57 / 5



Score 2.71 / 5

Visual Preference Survey

NATURE, PARKS, AND TRAILS – HIGH & LOW SCORES



Score 4.17 / 5



Score 4.4 / 5



Score 2.97 / 5

Three Workshopped Concept Plans

SUMMARY

For this exercise, three concept plans were presented to and discussed by meeting participants. Then, participants were asked to choose the plan that was closest to their ideal and then cut & paste, add detail, make changes, or alter the plan to their preferences. In addition to scissors, tape, markers and pens, participants were given a series of small cards that had sketches of buildings of various styles, densities, and use that they could attach to the plan to help describe what they would like to see in specific places within the study area.

The resulting workshopped concept plans are included in the following pages.

Three Workshopped Concept Plans

GREENWAY CONCEPT



Three Workshopped Concept Plans

VILLAGE CONCEPT



MAIN STREET CONCEPT



